

Emergency Disposal of Debris Resulting from Natural Disasters

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There is sufficient available landfill capacity within Alabama to properly manage the disposal of debris that may be generated during a natural disaster. However, in very limited circumstances that may arise following a natural disaster, the Department acknowledges the unavailability of collection and transportation options may result in the possible need for emergency disposal sites. In these unusual circumstances, plots of land may be used for the emergency disposal of debris created during natural disasters that, due to the amount of waste generated, or the unavailability of waste collection services, would overwhelm the existing solid waste management infrastructure. Under these extraordinary conditions, the following guidelines shall apply:

- Application for use of an unpermitted site for emergency disposal of debris **must** be submitted to the ADEM Solid Waste Branch by a unit of local or state government.
- Sites to be used only for the staging of waste do not need the approval of ADEM prior to use.
- Sites to be used only for open burning do not need the approval of ADEM prior to their use, as long as the ADEM guidelines for open burning of natural disaster debris are followed.
- Open burning shall not occur at a permitted landfill unless specifically approved by the ADEM Solid Waste Branch. Contact the Solid Waste Branch at 334-274-4201 for details.
- Sites to be used for disposal of regulated solid waste are to be approved by the ADEM-Solid Waste Branch prior to their use. The actual location of the site must be submitted to the ADEM Solid Waste Branch, along with any information that may be known about the site, such as proximity to residences, proximity to drinking water wells and wetlands, surface water bodies and streams. If the site is located within the 10-foot coastal zone, coordination with the ADEM-Field Operations Division must be done prior to approval.
- No hazardous wastes or putrescible wastes may be disposed of in these approved emergency disposal sites.
- Waste shall not be placed in groundwater if the site is excavated. Waste shall not be placed in wetlands.
- For sites where regulated solid waste was disposed, the owner of the property will be required to conduct post-closure care of the site for a period of time, to be determined by ADEM based on the types of waste disposed of and the location of the site, up to 30 years after the site is closed. The disposal site must be closed in accordance with ADEM regulations for closure of a permitted construction/demolition landfill. Additionally, an environmental covenant will be required following closure in accordance with ADEM-Division 5 regulations.
- The entity responsible for the disposal site must report to the ADEM-Solid Waste Branch once per month the activities that have occurred at the site for the previous month. ADEM will specify what is to be reported on a case-by-case basis.

The use of a site in an emergency situation does not imply that ADEM will approve the site as a permitted landfill. Following the cessation of emergency disposal activities, the site must comply with the permit application requirements of ADEM Administrative Code, Division 13 in order to operate as a permanent landfill.